

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for releasing a lens from an associated mold section in which the lens was formed and is adhered, the mold section having an optical surface on which the lens is formed, a non-optical surface located opposite the optical surface, an annular shoulder surrounding the optical surface, and an annular wall extending from the annular shoulder, said method comprising the steps of:
  - a) providing an axially movable pin on which the mold section may rest with an upper surface of the pin contacting the non-optical surface of the mold section located opposite the lens;
  - b) raising the pin to a stationary position such that the annular wall of the mold section is not directly supported;
  - c) providing a lens release head having an annulus;
  - d) pressing the lens release head and annulus on top of the mold section within predetermined load parameters with the annulus engaging the upper shoulder of the mold section while the non-optical surface of the mold section remains seated on the raised stationary pin;whereby the mold section is deformed and the lens is released from the mold section.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the lens release head movement and load parameters are controlled and programmed with a servo drive assembly.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the pin is located in a pallet that is moved along a conveyor, the pin being raised by an anvil having an upwardly sloping surface which the pin contacts and travels over as the pallet is moved beneath the lens release head.

4. The method of claim 3 and further comprising the step of picking the released lens from its associated mold section through a hole formed in the lens release head and annulus.
5. A method for simultaneously processing first, second and third lenses through a process station having a first lens release substation, a second lens inspection substation, and a third lens transfer substation, said method comprising the steps of:
  - a) providing a lens release substation, a lens inspection substation and a lens deposit substation in an annular array approximately  $120^{\circ}$  apart;
  - b) providing first, second and third lens pick and place fingers mounted to a rotatable plate approximately  $120^{\circ}$  apart and positioned above the lens release substation, lens inspection substation and lens transfer substation, respectively; whereby the rotatable plate rotates at  $120^{\circ}$  increments and thereby presents the first, second and third pick and place fingers through a cycle wherein each pick and place finger is sequentially moved from the first substation to the second substation and lastly to the third substation and whereby the cycle may be continuously repeated in an automated manner.
6. The method according to claim 5, whereby the lens release substation presents a lens in an associated mold section from which it is picked up by the first pick and place finger, rotating the plate  $120^{\circ}$  whereby the first pick and place finger presents its first lens at the lens inspection substation and the first lens is inspected thereby, said second pick and place finger simultaneously picking a second lens at the lens release substation while the first lens is inspected at the lens inspection substation, again rotating the plate  $120^{\circ}$  whereby the first pick and place finger presents the first lens to a lens receptacle and deposits the lens into the receptacle, said second pick and place

finger simultaneously presenting the second lens at the lens inspection substation and the second lens is inspected thereby, said third pick and place finger simultaneously picking a third lens at said lens release substation.

7. The method according to claim 6 whereby said cycle begins to repeat by rotating said plate 120° whereby said first pick and place finger is presented at said lens release substation to pick a fourth lens, said second pick and place finger is presented at said lens deposit substation and deposits the second lens into a receptacle, and said third pick and place finger is presented at said lens inspection substation and inspects the third lens.
8. A lens pallet having one or more mold section nests configured to accept a respective mold section therein, said pallet further including an axially movable pin located in a respective nest and on which the respective mold section may rest and move therewith.
9. The lens pallet of claim 8, and further comprising one or more receptacle nests located adjacent a respective mold section nest, said mold receptacle nest configured to accept a respective lens receptacle therein.
10. The lens pallet of claim 8 wherein each of said mold section nests includes a groove extending radially outwardly from the nest perimeter and configured to permit a material handling mechanism to pass through the groove and reach the mold section in the respective nest.